United Nations S/2008/186

Security Council

Distr.: General
24 March 2008

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security

Summary

In its presidential statement of 28 March 2007 (S/PRST/2007/7), the Security Council requested that I provide a report, in consultation with the relevant regional organizations, in particular the African Union, on specific proposals on how the United Nations can better support further cooperation and coordination with regional organizations on Chapter VIII arrangements.

In presenting this report, I have considered the important issues that define the nature of the collaborative partnership in international peace and security between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, and the division of responsibilities between the United Nations and those organizations under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. The report also describes the multifaceted nature and the many levels through which the Organization cooperates with regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. It also identifies the challenges and the opportunities that are created by such partnerships.

The last decade has witnessed a strengthened relationship, at different levels, between the United Nations and regional organizations. With the increase in the interface and synergies between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly the African Union, there appears to be recognition that regionalism as a component of multilateralism is necessary and feasible. There is now the possibility of a shared role for maintaining international peace and security. There is recognition of the need for greater involvement by regional organizations with the United Nations in conflict prevention, management and resolution in all regions.

Regional organizations have a keen interest in resolving crises that erupt in their backyard. However, they may be caught up in and made less effective because of the complex dynamics of regional conflicts.

Chapter VIII of the Charter stipulates that all enforcement action undertaken by regional arrangements or regional agencies must be authorized by the Security Council. Any endeavour to enhance the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations under Chapter VIII will need to be based on a clearer definition of the basis and processes of such cooperation.

In Africa, in particular, which has experienced a multiplicity of conflicts, the African Union and its predecessor institution, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), have for some time been engaged in conflict prevention, management and resolution. When the African Union undertakes peace and security interventions, it perceives its actions as a contribution to the international community and therefore needs the support of external actors.

Understanding and appreciating how such partnerships should be framed is crucial as there is the potential for misunderstanding and misperception concerning the meaning and scope of such a partnership.

The real challenge is to find ways to replace the improvised, at times selective, resource-skewed approach with more planned, consistent and reliable arrangements. Beyond the immediate funding for a regional mission start-up, procedures would need to be in place to review, on a case-by-case basis, how to ensure sustainable, flexible and predictable funding for long-term planning, deployment and sustainment of a peacekeeping operation undertaken by a regional organization and authorized by the Security Council.

I believe that the recommendations contained in the report can contribute significantly in addressing common security challenges and deepening and broadening dialogue and cooperation between the Security Council and regional organizations, in particular the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. The principal recommendations are described below.

On the nature and structure of partnership (para. 71), as many outstanding questions need to be clarified, the Security Council could consider: (a) defining the role regional organizations play in the maintenance of peace and security, in particular the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts; and (b) discussing how to make a distinction between regional organizations for Chapter VIII activities and all other regional organizations' activities, and developing a structure for identifying regional security mechanisms either by membership, focal area and/or mandate.

With regard to coordination and consultation mechanisms (paras. 72-74) between the United Nations and regional organizations, I recommend: (a) continuing the existing desk-to-desk dialogues on conflict prevention between the United Nations and regional organizations on cross-cutting issues of mutual interest and extending such a mechanism to the African Union; and (b) increasing consultations among regional organizations. On the coordination and consultation mechanisms between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, the Council may wish to fully implement provisions of its joint communiqué of 11 June 2007 with the Peace and Security Council and further encourage the sharing of experiences on the working methods between the two bodies.

To strengthen and improve the delivery for capacity-building for peacekeeping and peace support operations with regional organizations (para. 75), the United Nations should: (a) improve and better coordinate the various African peacekeeping training initiatives, including through the development of regional centres for military and civilian aspects of conflict prevention and peace support; and (b) enhance the capacity of the African Union and subregional organizations in the financial and administrative management of peacekeeping operations.

To enhance the predictability, sustainability and flexibility of financing regional organizations when they undertake peacekeeping under a United Nations mandate (para. 76), I propose setting up within the next three months an African Union-United Nations panel consisting of distinguished persons to consider in depth the modalities of how to support, including financing, peacekeeping operations undertaken by regional organizations, in particular as related to start-up funding, equipment and logistics, and make concrete recommendations.

In the field of disarmament and non-proliferation (para. 77), the United Nations and intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations should: (a) intensify coordination and cooperation in strengthening national, regional and international capacities in implementing the global counter-terrorism strategy; and (b) encourage regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union, to enhance exchange of information and to pursue further joint planning and implementation of regional and subregional initiatives to address the issues of small arms and light weapons.

On conflict prevention and mediation (paras. 78 and 79), in line with my recent proposals, I recommend: (a) strengthening the capacity of the Department of Political Affairs, both at Headquarters and in the field, including the establishment, in consultation with and with the full consent of concerned Member States, of regional offices to work closely with regional organizations; and (b) conducting joint reviews by the United Nations and regional organizations of the state of peace and security and of mediation endeavours, particularly in Africa where joint mediation is being undertaken.

With regard to peacebuilding support and post-conflict reconstruction (para. 80), the United Nations should: (a) establish a standing collaborative working group to develop an agenda of consultations on how to link United Nations peacebuilding processes and the Peacebuilding Commission with the work of regional organizations; and (b) ensure that measures are pursued during the peacekeeping phase to lay the foundations for sustainable post-conflict peacebuilding, with particular focus on building the capacity to strengthen the national reconciliation process and manage the economy.

In the area of human rights (para. 81), I recommend: (a) continuing to support the establishment of human rights components in peacekeeping and political missions; and (b) implementing the relevant provisions related to human rights in General Assembly resolution 61/296, in which the Assembly called upon the United Nations to assist in the development of a coherent strategy and appropriate policies to support the African Union.

On humanitarian action (para. 82), I recommend: (a) ensuring the mainstreaming of protection of civilians in armed conflict, including at the operational level, through the development of an African Union policy framework and guidance; and (b) enhancing the early warning methodology and systems currently utilized by the African Union, through the development of a multi-risk early warning tool that includes socio-political, natural, human-made and economic vulnerabilities.

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–2	5
II.	Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations	3–12	5
	A. Role of regional organizations in international peace and security	3–6	5
	B. Division of responsibilities	7–12	6
III.	Coordination and consultation mechanisms	13–26	8
	A. Between the United Nations and regional organizations in general	13–16	8
	B. Between the United Nations and the African Union in particular	17–25	8
	C. Cooperation between regional organizations	26	10
IV.	United Nations cooperation with regional organizations in peacekeeping	27–43	11
	A. Support to regional peacekeeping operations under Chapter VIII of the Charter	31–34	11
	B. Capacity-building for peacekeeping and peace support operations	35–43	12
V.	Cooperation with regional organizations in conflict prevention and mediation	44–49	14
VI.	Cooperation with regional organizations in disarmament and non-proliferation	50–56	16
VII.	Cooperation with regional organizations in peacebuilding	57–58	17
VIII.	Cooperation with regional organizations in human rights	59–63	18
IX.	Cooperation with regional organizations in humanitarian action	64–67	19
X.	Recommendations and proposals	68–82	19

I. Introduction

1. In its presidential statement of 28 March 2007 (S/PRST/2007/7), the Security Council reaffirmed its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The Council, however, recognized the important role of regional organizations in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. The Council requested that I submit a report, in consultation with the relevant regional organizations, in particular the African Union (AU), on how the United Nations could better support, cooperate and coordinate with those arrangements in Chapter VIII of the Charter. The purpose is to contribute significantly towards addressing common security challenges and to promote the deepening and broadening of dialogue and cooperation between the Security Council and, in particular, the Peace and Security Council and other organs of the African Union. The Security Council further stressed the importance of supporting and improving in a sustained way the resource base and capacity of the African Union. The present report, submitted pursuant to that request, examines the multiple types of support arrangements for further cooperation and coordination and provides proposals to promote and deepen dialogue between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council.

2. In preparing the present report, I have consulted as widely as possible both within the United Nations system and with various regional actors. A United Nations interdepartmental task force was established under the lead of the Department of Political Affairs to coordinate the preparation of this report. Consultations have been held with representatives of regional organizations and regional groups, including visits to headquarters of the European Union, the Organization of American States and the African Union Commission. In a letter dated 28 November 2007, the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations transmitted to me a document adopted by the Peace and Security Council on the contribution of the African Union to the report to be submitted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in pursuance of the Security Council's presidential statement of 28 March 2007.[1]

II. Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations

A. Role of regional organizations in international peace and security

3. The past decade has witnessed a strengthened relationship, at different levels, between the United Nations and regional organizations. Resolutions and presidential statements adopted by the Security Council signal a deepening recognition of the growing role and influence of regional organizations in international peace and security (see A/47/277-S/24111). This has yielded interesting perspectives and fruitful cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. It is, therefore, critical that regional organizations be encouraged and empowered to take actions to restore peace and security in conflicts and areas under their respective purview. These actions, however, cannot be viewed in isolation as many actors have a part to play in attaining overall global security.

[1] PSC/PR/2(XCVIII), 98th meeting, 8 November 2007.

4. Until 1990, there were no references in Security Council resolutions to regional organizations. From 1991, references to regional organizations' engagement in prevention and resolution of conflicts became common. The period that followed saw resolutions expressly recalling Chapter VIII of the Charter; conveying appreciation of regional efforts aimed at the settlement of conflicts; supporting cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations or endorsing regional efforts (see S/25184). While most of the references pertained to attempts at peaceful settlement of disputes, in 1992 the Security Council for the first time authorized the use of force by a regional organization.[2] Since 2004, the Council's relationships with respect to regional organizations have grown.

5. Early initiatives along these lines were welcomed by the General Assembly (see resolution 48/42, para. 63). In 1994, the General Assembly declared, as a follow-up to its resolution 48/42, that regional organizations should be encouraged and, where appropriate, supported by the Security Council in their efforts to address issues of peace and security (see resolution 49/57, annex, para. 5). In spite of what can be seen as a significant effort to collaborate with other organizations, such cooperation continues to pose a challenge to the United Nations, which is structured and funded to focus on its own operations rather than those led by other groups, even when such missions are encouraged or authorized by the Security Council.

6. Africa, in particular, has experienced a multiplicity of conflicts. Both the African Union and its predecessor institution, the Organization of African Unity, have for some time been engaged in conflict prevention, management and resolution. Responding to, and collaborating with, the African Union on different forms of crises has demonstrated that greater success is achieved when collaboration between the United Nations and regional organizations is well defined. Understanding and appreciating how such partnerships should be framed is crucial to determining and implementing the parameters of this role.

B. Division of responsibilities

7. The general mandate of a "regional organization" is set forth in Chapter VIII of the Charter. Under article 52, the Security Council encourages the development of pacific settlement of local disputes through regional arrangements. The pacific settlement of disputes is in accordance with the provisions laid out in Chapter VI of the Charter. Furthermore, article 53 notes that the Security Council shall, where appropriate, utilize regional arrangements for enforcement action under its authority, in accordance with the measures laid out in Chapter VII of the Charter.

8. In seeking to improve the cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations, there are several issues that need to be resolved concerning Chapter VIII arrangements. Part of this deals with the role of regional organizations in international peace and security. More importantly, it is also about the type and division of responsibilities. Any endeavour to enhance the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations under Chapter VIII will need to be based on a clearer definition of the basis and processes of such cooperation. While both the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly the African Union, refer to *partnership*, there remains the potential for

[2] Resolution 770 (1992) regarding the former Yugoslavia.

misunderstanding and misperception concerning the meaning and scope of such a partnership. When the United Nations partners with regional organizations, the parameters of such partnerships need to be well defined and well coordinated. It is also critical to establish specific support arrangements for such cooperation and coordination. Africa, for example, has come a long way in defining and refining its peace and security architecture since the end of the cold war, and has been playing a fundamental role in promoting peace and security. This role and its relationships with the global role of the Security Council need to be defined.

9. There are compelling underlying reasons to encourage and support the role of regional organizations in peacekeeping. These include their proximity to the crisis and their familiarity with the actors and issues involved in a particular crisis. More importantly, regional organizations have a keen interest in resolving crises that erupt in their backyard. Nevertheless, regional organizations may be caught up in and made less effective because of the complex dynamics of regional conflicts. They may also lack substantive political and diplomatic leverage, and/or economic and military capacities, to successfully address peace and security challenges, especially in conflicts involving multiple stakeholders within and outside the region.

10. Chapter VIII of the Charter stipulates that all enforcement action taken by regional organizations must be authorized by the Security Council. When the African Union undertakes peace and security interventions, it perceives its actions as a contribution to the international community and therefore needs the support of external actors. However, although the Security Council has been supportive to regional peace and security initiatives, its responses to decisions made by regional organizations have been on an ad hoc basis. This raises questions about the nature of such a partnership and relationships. For example, how far can the United Nations go to support decisions taken by regional organizations outside the remit of the Security Council? What types of authority does the Security Council delegate to regional organizations?

11. With the increase in the interface and synergies between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly the African Union, there appears to be recognition that regionalism as a component of multilateralism is necessary and feasible. There is now the possibility of a shared role for maintaining international peace and security. There is recognition of the need for greater involvement by regional organizations with the United Nations in conflict prevention, management and resolution in all regions. It is this need that underpins the vision of a mutually reinforcing regional-global mechanism for peace and security, as it was outlined in my predecessor's report entitled "A regional-global security partnership: challenges and opportunities", submitted to the General Assembly and the Security Council in 2006 (A/61/204-S/2006/590). Such an approach will reduce the endemic uncertainties and occasional tensions between the United Nations, which is responsible for international peace and security, and various regional organizations that are meant to play a supporting or subsidiary role.

12. Although there is recognition of the potential for, and sometimes the reality of, greater involvement by regional organizations in conflict prevention, management and resolution in cooperation with the United Nations, the real challenge for the Security Council is to replace the improvised, at times selective, resource-skewed approach with more planned, consistent and reliable arrangements.

III. Coordination and consultation mechanisms

A. Between the United Nations and regional organizations in general

13. In 1994, my predecessor established a high-level meeting process to discuss with regional organizations how best to improve cooperation through partnership. This process has since convened seven high-level meetings with the heads of regional organizations with a view to strengthening mutual cooperation, particularly on peace and security issues in the context of Chapter VIII of the Charter. The last high-level meeting was held in New York on 22 September 2006 and was attended by 20 delegations from regional, subregional and other intergovernmental organizations and by one observer delegation. At that meeting, the participants discussed my predecessor's report on a regional-global security partnership: challenges and opportunities (A/61/204-S/2006/590).

14. Within this framework, six working groups, convened by relevant departments, were established: dialogue among civilizations; lessons learned from field experiences; the protection of civilians in armed conflict; disarmament and non-proliferation; the protection of human rights in the fight against terrorism; and organizational and follow-up issues. The working groups adopted recommendations that could then be considered at the high-level meeting.

15. Participation in the high-level meetings has increased dramatically in recent years, and the size and diversity of the membership has prompted the Department of Political Affairs to undertake an assessment of the process with a view to ensuring its continued effectiveness. The High-level Tripartite Meeting between the United Nations, the Council of Europe and OSCE provides an opportunity for more focused discussions on issues of common interest.

16. Effective cooperation also requires mechanisms at the working level. In recent years, mechanisms such as the United Nations-European Union Desk-to-Desk Dialogue; the United Nations-European Union Steering Committee on Crisis Management; and the United Nations-OSCE Staff Level Meeting, have been established in order to strengthen the working relations and the flow of information between staff members of the United Nations and those organizations.

B. Between the United Nations and the African Union in particular

1. Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme

17. United Nations cooperation with the African Union was given a new impetus when the World Summit underscored the importance of devoting attention to the special needs of Africa and called for the establishment of a Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union that would fully take into account the widely expanded mandate of the African Union as compared with that of the former Organization of African Unity. In November 2006, the former Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Alpha Oumar Konaré, signed a Declaration on Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation: Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union (A/61/630, annex).

18. The Programme for the African Union is conceived as the United Nations overall strategic framework for cooperation with the African Union. Its main

objective is to enhance the capacity of the African Union Commission and African subregional organizations to act as effective United Nations partners in addressing the challenges to human security in Africa. The Framework covers all aspects of existing and future United Nations assistance to the African Union. However, the United Nations and the African Union have agreed that the implementation of the Programme should start with a focus, at least in the next three years, on peace and security.

19. In order to ensure a coordinated United Nations approach, it was decided that the Regional Consultative Mechanism, a body set up following the establishment of the African Union, would be the most appropriate structure to ensure the implementation of the Programme. The Mechanism, in which the United Nations agencies represented in Addis Ababa are working through clusters, is convened and chaired by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa. To reflect the agreed priority, a separate Peace and Security Cluster led by the Department of Political Affairs through the United Nations Liaison Office to the African Union was established in November 2006. Three sub-clusters were created in order to enable the Cluster to adequately perform the tasks outlined above: Peace and Security Architecture of the African Union (Convener: Department of Peacekeeping Operations); Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (Convener: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees); and Human Rights, Justice and Reconciliation (Convener: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights).

20. Other entities of the United Nations Secretariat such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs plan to establish an AU Liaison Office in Addis Ababa in 2008 to strengthen information exchange and facilitate support for the African Union in the areas of humanitarian policy development, protection of civilians, response coordination for complex and natural disasters, advocacy, information management and resource mobilization for new and ongoing emergencies.

21. In its resolution 61/296 of 5 October 2007, the General Assembly called for the implementation of the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme and requested that I take appropriate measures to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations Secretariat and to implement its mandate with respect to meeting the special needs of Africa.

2. Cooperation between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council

22. Improved partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations, by extension, assume that there will be consultation and coordination mechanisms between the Security Council and the peace and security organs of other regional organizations. In the case of the African Union in particular, the Peace and Security Council was established in March 2004 as part of a focal institution for collective African security that provides a clear security paradigm to construct continent-wide security architecture. The objectives of the Peace and Security Council include the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, the anticipation and prevention of conflicts and the promotion of peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. Furthermore, it is established as a standing decision-making organ intended to function as a collective security and early warning apparatus to facilitate a timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa.

23. Following the establishment of the Peace and Security Council, the Security Council adopted two presidential statements (S/PRST/2004/27 and S/PRST/2004/44), which recognized the importance of strengthening cooperation with the African Union in order to help build its capacity to deal with security challenges. This cooperation has been epitomized in the annex to Security Council resolution 1625 (2005), in which the Council expressed support for the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union.

24. As a result, the Department of Political Affairs received a request in November 2006 from the African Union Commission to train staff members of the secretariat of the Peace and Security Council on the work of the Security Council. The Security Council Affairs Division organized two training programmes in March and April 2007 for the secretariat of the Peace and Security Council, focusing on the working methods of the Security Council and the activities of the Division in its various aspects. The programme was aimed at strengthening the substantive and operational capabilities of the Peace and Security Council secretariat for effective functioning of the Peace and Security Council.

25. On 28 March 2007, the Security Council issued a presidential statement (S/PRST/2007/7) which encouraged the increased exchange of information and sharing of experience and best practices between the Security Council and the African Union. The first-ever joint meeting of the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council took place on 11 June 2007 in Addis Ababa. In a joint communiqué the two bodies agreed to strengthen the relationship between all the relevant structures of the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council, including their subsidiary bodies; expressed support for closer cooperation between the United Nations Secretariat and the African Union Commission, particularly on conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding; and committed themselves to the development of a stronger and more structured relationship (S/2007/421, annex II).

C. Cooperation between regional organizations

26. Relations and cooperation between regional organizations have also been an increasing phenomenon. For instance, over the past years, there have been an increasing number of regional organizations that have provided assistance in order to strengthen the African Union Commission's capacities. In the area of peace and security, the European Union has become a key partner of the African Union. The Second Africa-European Union Summit, which took place in Lisbon in December 2007, adopted a Joint Strategy and a Plan of Action which together encompass all the issues related to partnership between the two regions. Another example of partnership and cooperation is the conference on "Democracy Bridge: Multilateral regional efforts for the promotion and defense of democracy in Africa and the Americas", co-organized by the Organization of American States (OAS) and the African Union in July 2007. The Declaration of Intent that was signed during the Conference was the first-ever agreement to commit those organizations to jointly work for the promotion of democracy in Africa and the Americas. Regional-organization to regional-organization exchanges and mutual support are an encouraging trend as these organizations have much to share among themselves and

the scale of their challenges is often similar, especially in peace and security and related areas such as governance and elections.

IV. United Nations cooperation with regional organizations in peacekeeping

27. Further to Security Council resolution 1631 (2005), regional organizations have become significant contributors to international endeavours to support States in transition from serious conflicts and/or political instability to sustainable peace (see A/61/204-S/2006/590). Examples include the African Union in Burundi, Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and the Sudan; the European Union in Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan; OSCE in Georgia and Kosovo; NATO in Afghanistan and Kosovo; and OAS in Haiti.

28. The collaborative efforts in support of the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB) (2004-2005), the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) and then the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) (2004 to the present), as well as the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) (2007), present rich opportunities to draw lessons and best practices that could be built upon in order to develop and establish appropriate mechanisms.

29. While the African Union has started and assiduously continued with the processes for establishing the African Standby Force, it is also working on the legal and other standards to be reached in operations and in training. The African Union's basic assumption is that the African Standby Force will undertake peacekeeping activities with a view, in due course, to handing them over to the United Nations. That would require that AU and regional operations should be designed with a view to eventually handing over mandates and responsibilities to the United Nations. There is also a need to explore strategies for the handover of mandates from the United Nations to the regional organizations, as recently exemplified by the transfer of major aspects of the international civilian presence in Kosovo from the United Nations to the European Union.

30. With the increasing and deepening relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, there has also been a determined and ongoing initiative by several partners to support African countries with a range of capacity-building schemes designed to develop and enhance the quality and quantity of either African peace operation capabilities or African contributions to United Nations operations. Part of these support packages has been primarily intended to create African capacity to launch, lead and sustain peacekeeping interventions under the auspices of the African Union and/or the subregional organizations.

A. Support to regional peacekeeping operations under Chapter VIII of the Charter

31. Discussions around the issues of financing of peacekeeping operations undertaken by a regional organization have gained momentum recently, especially in the context of the support to African peacekeeping missions in Burundi, Darfur and Somalia. While regional organizations have demonstrated commendable political

will to deal with existing and emerging conflicts, timely responses have often been hampered by the lack of critical logistics and financial resources. The question was again the centre of the discussion at the Security Council meeting of 28 March 2007 devoted to the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security (see S/PV.5649 and Resumption 1).

32. In the aforementioned joint communiqué, the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council agreed in particular to consider, including on the basis of the present report, the modalities for supporting and improving in a sustained way the resource base of the African Union. They underlined the importance of support for the operationalization of the African peace and security architecture and in that context encouraged the implementation of the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme between the United Nations Secretariat and the African Union Commission. Furthermore, they agreed to bear in mind that in taking initiatives for the promotion of peace and security in Africa, the African Union was also acting on behalf of the international community consistent with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

33. I also welcome ongoing discussions between the African Union, the Group of Eight and the European Union, and encourage them to reach agreement on external voluntary resources that would ensure sustained and timely responses by regional and subregional organizations, on the basis of collective responsibility and mutual accountability.

34. Some of the crucial issues that need to be addressed include early planning and the start-up phase of an operation, as well as initial deployment requirements of the African Union. These are to enable it to intervene before funds are made available by the international community.

B. Capacity-building for peacekeeping and peace support operations

35. Notwithstanding the advantages of the external initiatives described in previous paragraphs, collaboration with regional organizations, particularly the African Union, must take into account the fact that these organizations are often constrained, in addition to lack of adequate financial resources, by their limited institutional and human resource capacities, which reduce their reach and operational effectiveness.

36. While the African Union's Peace and Security Directorate has the primary responsibility for peacekeeping, other directorates such as the Political Affairs Directorate could play a more active role in ensuring improved political processes, as in mediation activities. The AU support services, especially the Departments of Finance, Human Resources and Administration, need to be strengthened to better support the Peace and Security Directorate. In general, the formal mechanisms required to perform financial oversight are in place and have the mandates required, but the systems as a whole are not functioning optimally owing to capacity issues, ad hoc solutions and gaps of interpretation, and different understandings exist. Three core areas to be tackled are: (a) the improvement of financial reporting mechanisms; (b) the need for timely reporting mechanisms and exchange of information; and (c) improved human resource capacity-building. It was in recognition of this capacity gap that the 2005 World Summit Outcome called for "forging predictable partnerships and arrangements between the United Nations and

regional organizations" and "a strong African Union" (General Assembly resolution 60/1, para. 93). Further to this, the Security Council urged States and relevant international organizations to contribute to strengthening the capacity of African regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention and crisis management, and in post-conflict stabilization, and also welcomed the establishment by the European Union of the Peace Facility for Africa (Council resolution 1631 (2005)). Strengthening collaboration between the United Nations and regional organizations should therefore seek to harness the political capital that these regions possess, facilitate the enhancement of their operational capacity and strengthen coordination in defining policies, programmes and implementation of specific activities in the field to achieve peace and stability.

37. The United Nations approach to supporting African peacekeeping capacity-building is guided by the Secretary-General's report of 30 November 2004 on the enhancement of African peacekeeping capacity (A/59/591) and the subsequent 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1).

38. Within the framework of the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is undertaking efforts to support the African Union in the establishment of an African peace and security architecture through the establishment of the African Standby Force.[3] This major initiative represents an opportunity to develop concepts of collective security to new levels of partnership and cooperation, particularly given the increasingly complex nature of peacekeeping and the need to address the causes as well as the symptoms of conflict.

39. In order to accelerate and concretize the United Nations commitment to support African peacekeeping capacity-building, the General Assembly approved the establishment of the African Union Peacekeeping Support Team, a dedicated capacity within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Support Team, which became operational in January 2007, is providing the necessary expertise and transfer of technical knowledge to the AU Peace Support Operations Division and other sections contributing to peacekeeping. It also coordinates with other partners to ensure that the African Union receives the assistance it needs, and to reduce the possibility of duplication of effort. The positive impact of this team is already being felt by the Peace Support Operations Division.

40. The African Union Peacekeeping Support Team is focusing its efforts in three priority areas: mission planning, mission management, and logistics and resource management within the overall context of an integrated, inclusive and long-term approach. For this purpose, it comprises two elements:

(a) A small unit, based in New York, comprised of three Professional staff who provide strategic guidance and support to the larger element based in Addis Ababa, as well as the link to other United Nations entities and strategic-level communication with external partners;

(b) An operational unit, located in Addis Ababa, which focuses on direct support to the African Union in priority areas of cooperation that have been identified by the African Union, and the subsequent United Nations-African Union Joint Action Plan agreed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the

[3] As envisaged in the African Union's paper "Vision 2010".

African Union Peace Support Operations Division. The Plan will ensure the implementation of the road map for the operationalization of the African Standby Force by 2010.

41. To enhance the management skills and capacity of AU potential senior staff, the Peacekeeping Support Team, with the support of the Integrated Training Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, ran in June 2007 in Nairobi the first of a series of AU Senior Mission Leadership courses. The Peacekeeping Support Team, in coordination with the regional economic communities and other partners, also assisted in the review of the AU logistic base concept and has started work, in conjunction with the African Union, to advise on financial management structures and procedures drawing on the experience of United Nations processes.

42. In response to requests for support for AMISOM planning, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations provided an assessment of the planning requirements for AMISOM and has deployed to Addis Ababa, on a short-term basis, 10 experts in military, police and civilian strategic planning, who are working with the African Union and other partners to enhance the AU peacekeeping capacity. Efforts are ongoing to ensure that the team receives wider support from the United Nations to better enable it to assist the AU planning process.

43. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations has also provided technical advice to other AU peace and security-related projects, including the development of the AU rapid deployment concept, its border programme and mine-related activities, as well as the enhancement of the AU Situation Room.

V. Cooperation with regional organizations in conflict prevention and mediation

44. Most regional organizations are undertaking conflict prevention activities.[4] At the Council's request, I submitted a report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1625 (2005) on conflict prevention, particularly in Africa (S/2008/18), in which I stressed the importance of assisting regional organizations to build their own preventive capacity.

45. In Africa, the African Union and several of its regional economic communities are engaged in such activities, while in Europe, OSCE and the European Union maintain a conflict prevention centre with early warning systems. In the Americas, OAS is performing a similar function. In all regions, the development of agreed regional norms and principles on governance and prevention has been of fundamental importance to the establishment of these new structures. Collaborative efforts in conflict prevention and mediation have been undertaken with the African Union, including its regional economic communities. Nearly every mediation effort in Africa has been conducted with some level of cooperation between the African Union, subregional organizations or groups and the United Nations. Currently, the United Nations and the African Union are engaged in a joint effort to broker peace in Darfur, where envoys from both organizations are supported by a Joint Mediation Support Team. In West Africa, the Economic Community of West African States

[4] See the Secretary-General's progress report of 18 July 2006 on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891, paras. 63-68).

(ECOWAS) has often taken the lead in regional peacemaking with the support of the United Nations Office in West Africa. In Central Africa, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), with United Nations support, has decided to set up a subregional early warning mechanism designed to assist the Community and its member States to address early threats to prevent them from degenerating into conflict. The relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, however, needs to be strengthened and formalized by, among other processes, establishing mechanisms through which such partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations can better be managed.

46. The Security Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa organized an interactive seminar on the theme "An effective global conflict prevention strategy in Africa: the role of the Security Council" (see S/2007/783) on 3 December 2007. The Working Group made several recommendations on cooperation with regional organizations, in conformity with Chapter VIII of the Charter. A number of them highlighted the need to give adequate support to the initiatives and actions of regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention and settlement of conflicts, including in the framework of interregional partnerships.

47. On mediation-related issues, the Department of Political Affairs, through its Mediation Support Unit, is offering support to the African Union in several areas. At the African Union's request, an expert is being deployed to assist in developing an operational plan for the Panel of the Wise, including the establishment of its secretariat. Part of this assignment will entail identifying relevant experiences and lessons learned from other mediation units of regional and international organizations.

48. Regarding knowledge management support, options are being explored to develop an AU toolbox of mediation experience similar to the "UN Peacemaker", the Department of Political Affairs' own online databank of peace agreements and mediation experience. On training, three approaches have been agreed upon between the African Union and the Department: (a) participation of the African Union and the African regional economic communities in United Nations-tailored early warning and conflict prevention courses; (b) annual training of AU staff and that of the regional economic communities in political analysis; and (c) development of a specific mediation training programme for the African Union and the regional economic communities. In 2007, AU staff participated in two United Nations-tailored workshops in Sando, Sweden, and New York. The African Union and the Department of Political Affairs have also agreed to share mediation knowledge and expertise more regularly. Another area of cooperation concerns desk-to-desk exchange between AU and United Nations political, peace and security affairs officers, similar to the existing United Nations-European Union dialogue. A first such dialogue on countries and cross-cutting areas of mutual interest is planned for this year.

49. The Mediation Support Unit is also working closely with a number of regional organizations worldwide to build regional mediation capacity. To this end, a series of consultations have been carried out with mediators in Africa (Cape Town, South Africa, October 2006), Latin America and the Caribbean (San José, March 2007), and the OSCE area (Mont-Pèlerin, Switzerland, May 2007). These consultations provided an opportunity to identify "best practices" and lessons learned, to share

experiences between regional organizations, and to consider ways in which the United Nations can better support mediation efforts in a regional context in the future. Plans are under way for the holding of similar regional consultations in Egypt and Singapore this year.

VI. Cooperation with regional organizations in disarmament and non-proliferation

50. The Office for Disarmament Affairs is the convenor of the high-level meetings Working Group on disarmament and non-proliferation. In cooperation with OSCE, the Office organized a meeting of the Working Group in Vienna in July 2007, which adopted several recommendations on promoting the universality and implementation of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, and protection and assistance in case of attacks with weapons of mass destruction. These recommendations would be submitted at the next high-level meeting.

51. The Office for Disarmament Affairs, in partnership with the European Union, launched in October 2007 an initiative to promote the universality and implementation of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its annexed Protocols. The joint project of the Office and the European Union consists of six regional and subregional seminars in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, and in the Middle East and the Mediterranean region to be held in 2008 and 2009.

52. The Office for Disarmament Affairs has three Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament: in Africa (Lomé), Asia and the Pacific (Kathmandu), and in Latin America and the Caribbean (Lima). The regional centres provide substantive support to Member States and regional organizations for activities in the field of peace and disarmament.

53. The Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa collaborates closely with the ECOWAS Commission for the entry into force of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons. In August 2007, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and ECCAS signed a memorandum of understanding which, among other things, provides that the two institutions cooperate on the design of a subregional legal instrument for the control of small arms and light weapons and a code of conduct for armed security forces in Central Africa. In this context, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and its Regional Centre in Africa initiated steps for the elaboration of the instrument with financial support from Austria.

54. The Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean cooperates with OAS to address the illicit firearms issues in the region within the framework of the 2001 memorandum of understanding between the Office for Disarmament Affairs and OAS. In February 2007, a pilot project jointly undertaken by the Centre, Brazil and United Nations Development Programme-Brazil aimed to strengthen the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) Alliance by promoting citizen security and protecting against violence and firearms.

55. The Office for Disarmament Affairs also works closely with regional organizations in support of the work of the Committee established pursuant to

resolution 1540 (2004), including the organization of regional and subregional outreach seminars on implementing Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1673 (2006) aimed at raising awareness and facilitating assistance and cooperation among States on the implementation of those Security Council resolutions. Many regional and subregional organizations participated in these activities, including the European Union, OSCE, OAS, the Andean Community, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), ECCAS, ECOWAS and the League of Arab States.

56. Within the global framework of the implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the United Nations continues to work with regional and subregional organizations in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, the Arab region, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean to curb illicit arms trade by preventing the illicit production, trafficking, holding and transferring of weapons. The Office for Disarmament Affairs also works with regional organizations to implement the Programme of Action in the field. In this connection, in May 2007, the Office, in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other agencies, undertook a joint mission to Guinea-Bissau with the Small Arms Programme of ECOWAS aimed at reactivating a United Nations-sponsored project to support the activities of the country's national commission on small arms and light weapons. In addition, the Office, through its Regional Centre in Africa, provided substantive support to the Small Arms Programme of ECOWAS training programme for West African civil society organizations in practical disarmament.

VII. Cooperation with regional organizations in peacebuilding

57. One of the significant developments with regard to peacebuilding has been the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office.[5] The main purpose of the Peacebuilding Commission is to bring together relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery. The basis for institutional collaboration between the Commission and regional organizations such as the African Union is provided for in General Assembly resolution 60/180 establishing the Commission. Paragraph 7 of that resolution states that members of the Commission's country-specific meetings shall include relevant regional and subregional organizations, while paragraph 11 of the same resolution states that the Commission shall, where appropriate, work in close consultation with regional and subregional organizations to ensure their involvement in the peacebuilding process in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

58. Resolution 60/180 recognizes the roles that regional and subregional organizations can play to further peacebuilding. The Peacebuilding Commission has placed emphasis on the subregional dimension of peacebuilding in the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi (PBC/1/BDI/4) and the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework (PBC/2/SLE/1). It is expected that when a strategic framework for peacebuilding is developed for Guinea-Bissau, it will also highlight the importance of a subregional dimension of peacebuilding. The African Union is expected to play a key role in that process.

[5] General Assembly, resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005).

VIII. Cooperation with regional organizations in human rights

59. Taking into account that the rule of law, stable and democratic institutions, human rights protection and education are essential for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) seeks to address these elements, inter alia, through cooperation with regional organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the European Union, OSCE, the Council of Europe and the African Union in order to trigger and support national capacities in conflict and post-conflict societies. Current initiatives for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations contribute to information sharing and avoiding duplication of work.

60. In addition, within the framework of the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme, OHCHR, in its capacity as convener of the sub-cluster on human rights, justice and reconciliation, organized in October 2007 a consultative meeting in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia. The meeting, which was attended by various agencies of the United Nations system, relevant organs and institutions of the African Union, as well as representatives of some regional economic communities, resulted in an agreed set of priorities between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of human rights, justice and reconciliation for the 2008-2009 cycle.

61. Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. In the discharge of their mandate, the Special Procedures have brought their human rights expertise to bear on various activities dealing with early warning in countries where peace and security are at risk. In this context, some mandate holders have established a close relationship with regional organizations such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and its special thematic mechanism.

62. Close contacts and consultations have also been established between the special procedures and the African Union within the framework of Human Rights Council resolution 4/8,[6] in which the Council specifically called on the expert group of seven mandate holders presided over by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Sudan to work with the African Union.

63. OHCHR and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees publicly welcomed the adoption of a new ASEAN Charter by ASEAN leaders at their thirteenth annual summit in Singapore in November 2007. The new Charter incorporates positive commitments to the international human rights framework and commits the Association to the development of an ASEAN human rights body. Until now, Asia and the Pacific has been the one region without a dedicated regional human rights framework or mechanism. OHCHR will continue its dialogue with ASEAN in support of this important initiative.

[6] "Follow-up to decision S-4/101 of 13 December 2006 adopted by the Human Rights Council at its fourth special session entitled 'Situation of human rights in Darfur'" (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/62/53), chap. III).

IX. Cooperation with regional organizations in humanitarian action

64. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has engaged with the African Union and subregional organizations to advance a more effective policy framework for the protection of civilians. A meeting on the protection of civilians was held in April 2007 in Dakar with the participation of the African Union and other stakeholders. One of the main outcomes of the meeting was the recommendation that regional organizations such as the African Union develop, with support from the United Nations, their own strategies and policy frameworks for the protection of civilians in armed conflict, which can be used to guide their activities and their membership. The Office will continue to work closely with the African Union, in particular to support it in integrating and promoting the protection of civilians in its policy and operational work.

65. At the operational level there are numerous examples of cooperation with the African Union to better protect civilians and enhance humanitarian coordination. Over the first four years of its deployment, the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) and the United Nations humanitarian community worked closely to reduce threats facing the most vulnerable populations. Collaboration between AMIS/UNAMID and the international humanitarian community extended to joint organization of firewood patrols and developing community policing mechanisms. Similarly, the joint efforts saw the formation of community-based conflict mediation mechanisms to help to reduce tensions in displaced camps and with other communities, in addition to improving humanitarian access.

66. Priority policy areas for humanitarian action at the regional level in the short term include the consolidation of various disaster early warning systems that are being used by regional partners, including the African Union. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has recently developed an integrated multi-risk early warning tool that includes socio-political, natural, human-made and economic vulnerabilities, in an effort to further support the streamlining and consolidation of different early warning methodologies and lead to a global multidimensional and timely analysis system that supports appropriate responses by humanitarian actors.

67. At the programme level, the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction has supported the development of regional and subregional disaster risk reduction strategies and programmes by the African Union, ECOWAS, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Southern African Development Community. These programmes aim at reducing vulnerability to natural hazards, which in recent decades have led to scarcity of land and water. This scarcity has in turn led to the increased prevalence of resource-based conflicts in Africa. The Strategy is in the process of placing staff within the above-mentioned regional organizations and has drawn up a comprehensive programme to address drought risk reduction in Africa.

X. Recommendations and proposals

68. In the present report, I have sought to describe the multifaceted nature and the many levels through which the United Nations cooperates and collaborates with regional organizations, particularly the African Union, in the maintenance of

international peace and security. I offer some analysis of these collaborative schemes and the challenges that they face but certainly also the opportunities that are created by such partnerships.

69. In my recent report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1625 (2005) on conflict prevention, particularly in Africa (S/2008/18), I offered a number of important recommendations and proposals that I considered relevant in the context of the present report. I reiterate my call for their full implementation.

70. Mindful of the challenges that are described in the present report, I submit for the consideration of the Security Council the recommendations set out below.

On the nature and structure of partnership

71. With a view to clarifying the critical role of regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security, there are outstanding questions about the nature of the partnership that need to be clarified. To that end, the Security Council could consider:

(a) Defining the role regional organizations play in the maintenance of peace and security, in particular the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts;

(b) Establishing a system and a formula that allows the United Nations to engage with regional organizations when a conflict erupts;

(c) Discussing common approaches and frameworks that can be designed to ensure that the nature of the collaboration and cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is clarified, including a common code of conduct;

(d) Discussing how to make a distinction between regional organizations for Chapter VIII activities and all other regional organizations' activities, and developing a structure for identifying regional security mechanisms either by membership, focal area and/or mandate;

(e) Engaging in consultations on options for a structured cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations involved in regional peace operations, including a possible mechanism aimed at enhancing interactions with the Security Council.

Coordination and consultation mechanisms

72. To strengthen coordination and consultation between the United Nations and regional organizations, I recommend:

(a) Continuing the existing desk-to-desk dialogues on conflict prevention between the United Nations and regional organizations on cross-cutting issues of mutual interest and extending such a mechanism to the African Union. In particular, I welcome increased consultations among regional organizations;

(b) Ensuring the implementation of the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme in the areas of peace and security. In this connection, a report on the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs (A/62/521), including the United Nations Liaison Office to the African Union, which addresses, inter alia, the implementation of the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme, is currently before the General Assembly for its consideration and decision.

73. To strengthen the coordination and consultation mechanisms between the Security Council and regional organizations, particularly with the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, the Council may wish to:

(a) Fully implement provisions of its joint communiqué with the Peace and Security Council;

(b) Formalize the holding on an annual basis of joint meetings between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council as envisaged in paragraph 12 of the communiqué, and put in place similar arrangements with its other regional partners;

(c) Further encourage the sharing of experiences on the working methods between the two bodies.

74. To enhance closer cooperation between the United Nations Secretariat and the African Union Commission, the following could be considered:

(a) Supporting a follow-up mission by United Nations Secretariat staff to AU headquarters to provide further assistance and share experiences in institutional memory-building;

(b) Supporting a training programme for African Union Peace and Security Council secretariat staff on the challenges of implementing sanctions and/or other restrictive measures.

Capacity-building for peacekeeping and peace support operations

75. To strengthen and improve the delivery for capacity-building for peace support operations with regional organizations, the United Nations should:

(a) Improve and better coordinate the various African peacekeeping training initiatives, including through the development of regional centres for military and civilian aspects of conflict prevention and peace support. Such training should include human rights and international humanitarian law (pursuant to article 13, para. 13, of the Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council) as well as a module on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000);

(b) Support the African Union to develop a comprehensive peace and security policy;

(c) Support the establishment of relevant planning capability within the AU Peace and Security Directorate; working with the African Union in developing benchmarks for entry, end states, and exit strategies or possibility of the handover of mandates from regional organizations to the United Nations or other peace support arrangements;

(d) Improve the African Union's strategic and multidimensional operational-level mission planning and management of peacekeeping operations;

(e) Enhance the capacity of the African Union and subregional organizations in the financial and administrative management of peacekeeping operations;

(f) Liaise with and, where appropriate, support coordination among international partners involved in support to AU peacekeeping capacity-building.

Funding regional peacekeeping operations

76. To enhance the predictability, sustainability and flexibility of financing regional organizations when they undertake peacekeeping under a United Nations mandate, I propose setting up within the next three months an African Union-United Nations panel consisting of distinguished persons to consider in depth the modalities of how to support, including financing, peacekeeping operations undertaken by regional organizations, in particular as related to start-up funding, equipment and logistics, and make concrete recommendations.

Disarmament and non-proliferation issues

77. To support efforts in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation at the regional level, the United Nations and intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations should:

(a) Intensify coordination and cooperation in strengthening national, regional and international capacities in implementing the global counter-terrorism strategy, including in particular those elements on preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism;

(b) Coordinate in the planning and execution of those bodies' activities with regard to supporting States in their implementation of Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1673 (2006), with a view to enhancing efforts, producing synergy and avoiding duplication;

(c) Encourage regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union, to enhance exchange of information and to pursue further joint planning and implementation of regional and subregional initiatives, including workshops and training, in order to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action, the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, and other international and regional instruments on small arms and light weapons.

Conflict prevention and mediation

78. To enhance cooperation with regional organizations in areas of conflict prevention and mediation, I recommend:

(a) Strengthening the capacity of the Department of Political Affairs, both at Headquarters and in the field, including the establishment, in consultation with and with the full consent of concerned Member States, of regional offices to work closely with regional organizations. Attention should be given on a priority basis to the opening of a regional office for Central Africa and the Great Lakes region to support the preventive efforts of ECCAS and the Executive Secretariat of the Great Lakes Conference;

(b) Providing adequate support to the initiatives and actions of regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention, through the United Nations and within the framework of interregional partnerships;

(c) Enhancing cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations in the area of early warning and conflict prevention, building on the experience and practice of both the AU Early Warning Office and the work of the United Nations Interdepartmental Framework Team for Coordination on Early

Warning and Conflict Prevention as well as the Secretary-General's reports on conflict prevention;

(d) Providing, through the United Nations and interested Member States and regional organizations, training to AU staff to improve their capacity to undertake critical analyses as part of the continental early warning system.

79. To enhance mediation efforts, I suggest:

(a) Conducting joint reviews by the United Nations and regional organizations of the state of peace and security and of mediation endeavours, particularly in Africa where joint mediation is being undertaken;

(b) Ensuring availability of the United Nations/Multinational Specialized Unit (MSU) standby team of mediation experts for deployment to regional organizations, on an as-needed basis;

(c) Providing training and ensuring the development of specific modules for staff of regional organizations on political analysis and mediation techniques;

(d) Ensuring that the United Nations support the African Union in developing an operational plan for the Panel of the Wise and enhancing its capacity for conflict prevention and peacemaking by:

(i) Supporting the recruitment of a small secretariat with research capabilities;

(ii) Helping to identify areas of possible financial support for the secretariat's activities;

(iii) Assisting in the establishment of a database of African mediators and in setting up a lessons learned unit and a knowledge management system that is compatible with the United Nations peacemaking databank;

(iv) Developing AU-tailored mediation training programmes, involving subregional organizations and other AU partners.

(e) Ensuring that the United Nations support the African Union also in the establishment of a small standing team of experienced and specialized experts available for rapid deployment in support of mediation processes in Africa.

Support to peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction

80. To strengthen cooperation with regional organizations in providing peacebuilding support, the United Nations should:

(a) Establish a standing collaborative working group to develop an agenda of consultations on how to link United Nations peacebuilding processes and the Peacebuilding Commission with the work of regional organizations, with special attention given to the African Union's capacity and ongoing effort relating to peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction;

(b) Develop linkages between the post-conflict reconstruction and development activities of the African Union and the Peacebuilding Commission as well as the Peacebuilding Support Office;

(c) Provide support to the African Union in building up its capacity for planning, coordination, oversight and implementation of strategic peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction programmes;

(d) Ensure that measures are pursued during the peacekeeping phase to lay the foundations for sustainable post-conflict peacebuilding, with particular focus on building the capacity to strengthen the national reconciliation process and manage the economy.

Human rights

81. In the area of human rights, I recommend:

(a) Continuing to support the establishment of human rights components in peacekeeping and political missions in order to provide in-depth monitoring, analysis and reporting of human rights developments to ensure better protection of human rights and support political, diplomatic, peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts;

(b) Supporting the regional organizations in mainstreaming international human rights instruments and building institutional capacity through staff training;

(c) Implementing the provisions of paragraphs 16 and 19 of General Assembly resolution 61/296 — in which the Assembly called upon the United Nations to assist in the development of a coherent strategy and appropriate policies to support the African Union — in particular by providing technical and financial support for the African conference on the development of a strategy for the promotion and protection of human rights in 2008; assisting in the strengthening of the Human Rights Unit in the Political Affairs Directorate of the African Union, and enhancing the capacity of regional human rights treaty bodies, including the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, and those established by regional economic communities.

Humanitarian action

82. On humanitarian action, I recommend:

(a) Ensuring that protection of civilians in armed conflict is mainstreamed, including at the operational level, through the development of an African Union policy framework and guidance;

(b) Enhancing and strengthening the early warning methodology and systems currently utilized by the African Union, through the development of a multi-risk early warning tool that includes socio-political, natural, human-made and economic vulnerabilities.